

EXHIBIT 19
DATE 2/8/07
HB 447



Montana Economic Developers Association

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January 17, 2007

Rep. John Sinrud, Chair
House Appropriations Committee
State Capitol
PO Box 200400
Helena, MT 59620-0400

Re: HB447 INFRASTRUCTURE DEVELOPMENT FUNDING

Dear Chairman Sinrud:

The Montana Economic Developers Association (MEDA) represents over 200 professionals who work with local economic development organizations across the State of Montana. MEDA's members include leaders within the economic development profession, business specialists, government employees, and staff members of affiliated non-profit organizations who promote and foster economic development activities in Montana.

One of the greatest obstacles to increased economic growth for many Montana communities is inadequate public infrastructure. The Treasure State Endowment Program is an existing source for infrastructure needs, but there are many more projects than monies to fund.

Continued lack of funding has allowed much of the State's infrastructure to deteriorate alarmingly and the costs of repair and/or replacement are more than many communities can bear. All 56 of Montana's counties are plagued with these, often overwhelming, infrastructure needs. This legislation will support efforts by local and county leaders to leverage Tax Increment Financing in order to address long standing infrastructure needs within their communities ranging from street and road repair to technology infrastructure development to the repair of public buildings.

The members of MEDA strongly encourage your support for this legislation as it will provide an effective measure of help for Montana communities struggling to overcome the obstacles of inadequate infrastructure as they move toward greater economic growth and prosperity.

Sincerely,

Rick Edwards, President

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